

Amendment Under 37 C.F.R. § 1.111
Serial No. 10/670,796
Sughrue Ref: Q77714

REMARKS

Claims 1-8 are all the claims pending in the application. By way of this Amendment, Applicant has amended claims 1 and 7. For the following reasons, it is submitted that the claims patentably distinguish over Saito (U.S. Patent No. 5,088,940).

Claim 1 is directed to an electric distribution box which includes a block body 12 integrally formed with a connector mounting portion 20/30 which has a cavity therein. Also provided is a bus bar 50/60 which is integrally formed with a terminal portion 55/65. According to the invention, a slit 23/33 is formed in the connector mounting portion 20/30 and the terminal portion 55/65 is inserted into the connector mounting portion through the slit.

Referring to the Office Action, the Examiner contends that reference numeral 1 of Saito corresponds to the block body; reference numeral 4 corresponds to the claimed bus bar; and reference numerals 4e and 4f correspond to the claimed terminal portion. Further, it appears that the Examiner contends that the receiving chamber 12 corresponds to the claimed cavity and that slits 3a and 3a' correspond to the claimed slit.

Applicant respectfully submits that claim 1 patentably distinguishes over Saito for the following reasons. First, claim 1 has been amended to recite that the connector mounting portion includes a female housing defining a cavity. Saito does not teach or suggest this feature. Similarly, Saito does not teach or suggest a female housing having a face which is opposed to an insertion direction of the terminal portion into the cavity, and further does not disclose that the slit is formed on the face of the female housing, as amended claim 1 requires. On this basis alone, it is submitted that claim 1 patentably distinguishes over the reference.

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Another distinction between the claimed invention and that disclosed in Saito is that, according to the invention, the terminal portion 55/65 is inserted into the connector mounting portion by passing the terminal portion through the slit so that it is received in the cavity. This is not the case in Saito. Instead, the connection portion 4f of the joint terminal member 4 of Saito is simply inserted into the cavity from above; it is not passed through the slit 3a', and/or connector 8 in view of its relative oversized dimensions.

Accordingly, it is submitted that claim 1 and its dependent claims patentably distinguish over Saito.

With respect to method claim 7, claim 7 has been amended by modifying the inserting step to recite "inserting the terminal portion of the bus bar into the cavity of the mounting portion by passing the terminal portion through the second slit." As noted above, Saito does not teach or suggest this feature of the invention.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. It is therefore respectfully requested that the application be passed to issue at the earliest possible convenience. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

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Respectfully submitted,



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